

LAKE-00030

September 6, 2007

Mr. Adam Zellner, Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Legislative Affairs
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
401 East State Street, 7th Floor, East Wing
P.O. Box 402
Trenton, NJ 08625-0402

**Re: NJDEP Areas for Possible Preservation
Lakewood Plan Endorsement Petition and Regional Center Designation**

Dear Mr. Zellner,

The Township of Lakewood welcomes the opportunity to comment on the areas identified by NJDEP for possible preservation in Lakewood. This review is an important element of the Township's petition for State Plan Endorsement and Regional Center designation, as well as its local comprehensive planning efforts, and has been carefully considered by Lakewood.

As recommended by you and your staff, Lakewood analyzed the areas identified in the map submitted to the Township by NJDEP to determine if the Township could designate additional areas for preservation in Lakewood. As part of its review, the Township has identified and mapped existing dedicated open space and recreation areas or areas that are currently protected through regulatory controls and restrictions (e.g., wetlands, floodplains, or buffer areas). In addition, Lakewood evaluated whether or not additional areas could be preserved, with a particular emphasis on properties that are currently owned by the Township.

As part of its analysis, Lakewood prepared the following maps:

- NJDEP Areas Identified for Possible Preservation. (Figure 1). Lakewood encompasses an area of 24.6 square miles or 15,718 acres. In the mapping submitted to the Township, NJDEP identified 4,221 acres or 26.9 percent of the Township as possible areas for preservation.
- Regulated and Protected Areas/Existing Recreation and Open Areas. (Figure 2). This map illustrates in Lakewood currently protected areas through regulatory controls, (e.g. wetlands, flood plains, or buffer areas to the various C-1 waterways) or set aside as parks and recreation areas, dedicated open space, preserved farmland or proposed to be preserved, and conservation easements. As can be seen from this map, a significant amount of the Township is already protected. These protected areas encompass an area of 4,480.9 acres or 28.5 percent of the Township.

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- Net NJDEP Identified Areas. (Figure 3). This map subtracts those areas already preserved or protected from NJDEP's identified areas. This results in a net 2,159 acres remaining from NJDEP's original proposal. These areas are the focus of the analysis proposed by Lakewood.
- Net NJDEP Identified Areas with Township Owned Properties. (Figure 4). This map shows the Net NJDEP Identified Areas superimposed with Township-owned properties. Lakewood reviewed its list of Township-owned properties to evaluate potential areas that could be set-aside for preservation. Please note that this is the most recent data layer available regarding municipally-owned properties and requires updating. For example, the Cedar Bridge Corporate Office Campus is identified as Township-owned, while it is a redevelopment area that will be redeveloped by a private redeveloper. Similarly, several affordable housing sites to be developed by the Housing Authority, NJ Hand and Steps are shown as municipally-owned.
- Proposed Township Preservation Areas. (Figure 5). This map illustrates areas within the Net NJDEP Identified Areas that the Township is proposing for preservation; areas that are approved or planned for development based on prior approvals or the Township's Master Plan, adopted redevelopment plans, and Regional Center Conceptual Plan; and areas that require further discussion and analysis. A detailed description of each identified site follows.

A. Proposed Township Preservation Areas

Lakewood's response to NJDEP and areas proposed for preservation are illustrated on Figure 5 and described as follows:

1. **Shorrock Street.** The Township has zoned areas along Shorrock Street and north of the Four Seasons development as Open Space (OS). The Township and the State's Natural Land Trust are listed as owners of this area. NJDEP identifies this area for preservation and includes additional Township-owned parcels adjacent to the Garden State Parkway (GSP) right-of-way, the GSP interchange and toll both, and the undeveloped tract on the eastside of Shorrock Street. NJDEP also identifies some possible preservation areas within privately-held property in the Four Seasons development.

Lakewood Response. Lakewood will extend the OS zone to all publicly-held properties in this area, but not to privately-owned properties.

2. **Hotel Site.** NJDEP identifies the undeveloped tract East of the Garden State Parkway right-of-way and North of Route 70 for possible preservation. Lakewood has divided this area into the Hotel site and Politi Site (described

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below). Lakewood has approved a hotel on the North side of Route 70. The CAFRA permit required a portion to be set aside as a conservation easement (CAFRA permit 1514-02-0002.2 CAF020001 & 1514-02-0002.1 FWW020002).

Lakewood Response. The proposed development area of the Hotel Site is not identified for preservation. The conservation easement has previously been identified for preservation.

3. **Politi Site.** As noted above, the Politi Site is located in an undeveloped tract east of the Garden State Parkway right-of-way and North of Route 70. There currently is an application to develop this area that will include a conservation easement for a portion of the tract.

Lakewood Response. The proposed development area of the Politi Site is not identified for preservation, but the approved conservation easement will be included as a possible preservation area.

4. **GSP Right-of-Way Open Space.** NJDEP identifies the area that is adjacent to the Garden State Parkway (GSP) right-of-way between Route 70 and the Township boundary as a possible area to be preserved. NJDEP also identifies a smaller area, also adjacent to the GSP and near Route 88, for possible preservation. Both areas are owned by Garden State Parkway Authority.

Lakewood Response. The Township does not have jurisdiction over this area. Lakewood recommends that this area be preserved as open space unless otherwise determined by the Parkway Authority or State.

5. **Cedar Bridge Avenue Open Space.** NJDEP identifies a Township-owned parcel along Cedar Bridge Avenue between the Garden State Parkway (GSP) and the Township boundary with Brick Township for possible preservation. This is an undeveloped tract with a majority of the site's frontage encumbered by the Metedeconk River (South Branch) C-1 buffer, wetlands, and flood hazard areas.

Lakewood Response. Lakewood has proposed this area for preservation.

6. **Metedeconk River #1.** NJDEP identifies areas along the Metedeconk River (North Branch) proximate to the Township's boundary with Brick Township for possible preservation. Most of the areas are within the Category One buffer of the Metedeconk River, but several parcels are outside of this buffer. There is a variety of owners in this area. The JCP&L utility easement also runs along this area.

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The Township's 1999 Master Plan proposed a greenway in this area, which included all publicly held properties along the Metedeconk River (South Branch), Lake Shenandoah, the greenways in the Lakewood Industrial Campus, and the Watering Place Brook at the Crystal Lake Preserve area.

Lakewood Response. The Township proposes that further review and analysis be undertaken to determine whether or not the additional parcels identified by NJDEP should be preserved.

7. **Metedeconk River #2.** NJDEP identifies a number of additional areas along the Metedeconk River (North Branch) that are not within the 300 foot Category One buffer for possible preservation. Although, there are a few Township-owned parcels in this area, the majority of the area is privately-owned.

Lakewood Response. A majority of the area is privately-owned and is not proposed for preservation.

8. **Metedeconk River #3.** NJDEP identifies an area along the Metedeconk River (North Branch) that is not within the limits of the Category One buffer for possible preservation. This parcel is privately-owned.

Lakewood Response. This area is privately-owned and not proposed for preservation.

9. **Pine Park.** NJDEP identifies an area adjacent to Pine Park and the Lakewood County Club for possible preservation. These parcels are privately-owned.

Lakewood Response. This area is privately-owned and not proposed for preservation.

10. **Lakewood Country Club.** Adjacent to the Lakewood County Club and Pine Park is a 94.15 acre tract that is owned by the Lakewood County Club and is identified for possible preservation by NJDEP. This area is currently not developed.

Lakewood Response. The Township proposes further analysis and review for this area. Lakewood will contact the Lakewood Country Club regarding their plans for this tract.

11. **Hope Hill Run Lane.** Adjacent to the border with the Township of Jackson is an undeveloped tract that NJDEP identifies for possible preservation. There are some Township-owned parcels that are interspersed in this area.

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Lakewood Response. Lakewood proposes further review and analysis of this area.

12. **Georgian Court University/Lake Carsaljo.** NJDEP identifies a small area along Lake Drive fronting Georgian Court University and Lake Carsaljo that is outside the buffer area of the Category One waterway for possible preservation. There are some Township-owned properties that are zoned A-1 (Agriculture) in this area. The Master Plan Reexamination Report recommends that the Township establish an OS (Open Space) zone district for Lake Carsaljo. The area also encompasses portions of the Sunken Garden and the Lagoon on the Georgian Court University campus.

Lakewood Response. Lakewood proposes that the OS zone be extended to all publicly-held properties in this area consistent with its Master Plan Reexamination Report. In addition, Lakewood will contact Georgian Court University regarding their plans for this area.

13. **Westgate to Faraday Ave.** There is patchwork of privately-held properties between Westgate and Faraday Avenue in the southwestern portion of the Township that has been identified by NJDEP for possible preservation. Within this area, the Ocean County Farmland Preservation Program indicates that there is an active farmland preservation application currently underway for the Ketchledge farm on Drake Street.

Lakewood Response. Given the extent of privately-owned properties in the area, the Township proposes that this area be identified for further review and analysis. The Ketchledge farm was identified as a protected area on Figure 2.

14. **Crystal Lake Preserve (Central Avenue/James Street).** NJDEP identifies additional areas outside the Crystal Lake Preserve (CLP) zone district for possible preservation. Most of these sites in this area are privately-owned. The area near Central Avenue is in the rear yards of privately-owned residential dwellings and the James Street area is privately-owned property.

Lakewood Response. This area requires further review and analysis. The Township suggests that NJDEP identify appropriate funding sources that can be provided by the County and State-level for additional acquisition and preservation proximate to the Crystal Lake Preserve. The rear yards of existing residential properties are excluded from proposed preservation areas.

15. **Lake Manetta.** NJDEP identifies a tract along Watering Place Branch, a tributary to the Metedeconk River for possible preservation. The area proposed for preservation is not within wetlands or the Category One buffer. This parcel is privately-owned.

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Lakewood Response. This area is privately-owned and not proposed for preservation.

16. **Industrial Park #1 (James Street).** NJDEP identifies an area in the Industrial Park #1 along James Street for possible preservation. The Industrial Park #1 area has been identified by Lakewood's plan endorsement petition and Regional Center proposal as an "Industrial Core" and as an "Industrial Node" by the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) in its response to the Township's petition for plan endorsement. The area is privately-owned.

Lakewood Response. This area is privately owned, planned for development, and not proposed for preservation.

17. **Rail Line ROW.** There is a 6.13-acre Township-owned property along the rail line right-of-way and fronting James Street that NJDEP identifies for possible preservation. The majority of the site is encumbered by wetlands. Adjacent to the Township property are privately-owned parcels that NJDEP also recommends for preservation.

Lakewood Response. The Township-owned site is encumbered by wetlands, and as such is proposed for preservation. However, the non-wetland, privately-owned lands are not proposed for preservation.

18. **Prospect Street.** NJDEP identifies an area that includes an existing industrial structure along Prospect Street for possible preservation. The area is in the Industrial Park and privately-owned.

Lakewood Response. This area is privately-owned and not proposed for preservation.

19. **Prospect/Cross Street Core.** NJDEP identifies the Prospect/Cross Street Core as a possible preservation area. The Prospect/Cross Street Core is included in the Township's plan endorsement petition and Regional Center proposal as mixed-use core. Lakewood is currently investigating a mixed-use planning approach for the Prospect/Cross Street Core that would integrate residential, commercial, and public uses, including open space and preservation area as part of a comprehensive mixed-use center plan for this area. Portions of this area have been identified in the Master Plan Reexamination Report as possible open space.

Lakewood Response. Lakewood is preparing a mixed-use center plan that will include open space and preservation elements consistent with smart growth planning principles.

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20. **Route 9.** NJDEP identifies an area bounded by Route 9, Cross Street, Massachusetts Avenue and Cedar Court for possible preservation. This area is privately-owned.

Lakewood Response. This area is privately-owned and not proposed for preservation.

21. **The Enclave.** NJDEP identifies an area known as the Enclave in Lakewood for possible preservation. The Enclave is a 350 active-adult residential community currently being developed along Cross Street and Massachusetts Avenue. The site includes a wetland with intermediate resource value with a 50 foot buffer and an approximate 2.02-acre tree save area.

Lakewood Response. The developed area of the Enclave is not identified for preservation, but the approved conservation easement is included as a possible preservation area.

22. **Lake Shenendoah.** NJDEP identifies areas that encompasses the County Park of Lake Shenendoah and other publicly-owned properties for possible preservation..

Lakewood Response. Lakewood will extend the Open Space (OS) zone to all publicly-held properties in this area.

23. **Stadium Support Zone.** NJDEP identifies an area currently identified as the Stadium Support Zone on Cedar Bridge Avenue for possible preservation.

Lakewood Response. This area is planned for private development and is not proposed for preservation.

24. **Vine Street.** NJDEP identifies an area that is not part of the wetland boundaries on Vine Street for possible preservation. This area is privately-owned.

Lakewood Response. This area is privately-owned and not proposed for preservation. The Township is aware of ongoing proposed development projects in this area that have received or are in the process of receiving planning/zoning board approvals.

25. **Industrial Park #2 (Industrial Campus/Industrial Park).** NJDEP identifies an area that includes the both the Township's Industrial Campus and Industrial Park for possible preservation. The Industrial Park #2 area has been included in Lakewood's plan endorsement petition and Regional Center boundary as a proposed "Industrial Core" and as an "Industrial Node" in the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) response to the Township's plan endorsement petition. The

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Industrial Campus, north of Cedar Bridge Avenue, includes a greenway surrounding the development, a 25-acre preserved cranberry bog intended to serve as an educational and historical feature on the site, and a 28-acre airport safety zone (CA# 77-0203-5). An 86-acre natural boundary along the Metedeconk River (South Branch) is owned by the County. The Industrial Campus and Industrial Park is managed by the Lakewood Development Corporation and is privately-owned.

Lakewood Response. This area requires further review to determine the extent of proposed development activities in the Industrial Campus and Industrial Park and potential opportunities for additional preservation.

26. **Airport.** NJDEP identifies areas within the Lakewood Airport for possible preservation. The Airport is currently undergoing a review of its Master Plan and on February 24, 2006 received a conditional approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of its "Airport Layout Plan," dated February 1, 2006. The Airport Layout Plan includes 19.02 acres of land acquisition for a clear zone and a proposed demolition of several buildings on the northwest section of the tract.

Lakewood Response. Depending on final FAA approval for the airport's master plan, the Township recommends that the clear zone areas and the northwestern sections be proposed as preservation areas.

27. **South of Route 70.** NJDEP identifies an area bounded by Route 70 to the North, Jeffery Street to the East, and the Dover Township border to the South for possible preservation. There are several development projects that are currently being developed along Locust Street. In addition, the Master Plan Reexamination Report recommends rezoning an area bounded by New Hampshire to Jeffery Street. This area is privately-owned.

Lakewood Response. This area is privately-owned and not proposed for preservation. Lakewood also notes that there are ongoing development approvals that have been received or are in the process or receiving planning/zoning board approvals.

28. **Affordable Housing/School Site/Recreation Areas Core.** NJDEP identifies the sites that have been set aside for affordable housing, school sites, and a recreation area for possible preservation. This area is included in the Township's plan endorsement petition and Regional Center proposal as the "Affordable Housing/School/Public Recreation Core." As outlined in the Township's Regional Center proposal, the affordable housing in this area is to be linked to the proposed schools, the John F. Patrick Sports Complex as well as to a proposed Township-wide pedestrian and bicycle pathway and satellite retail

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shopping area. Development activity has begun in this area with two school sites developed and one affordable housing tract currently being constructed.

Lakewood Response. Lakewood is preparing a comprehensive plan for this area that will include both development and open space. This plan will include the development of the affordable housing sites, school sites, recreation areas, and satellite retail areas. A component of this plan is the Kettle Creek Recreation Area as well as a preservation strategy for the Kettle Creek stream corridor. The Kettle Creek stream corridor was discussed in the Master Plan Reexamination Report as an area to be studied and evaluated for preservation and protection. It is also identified as an open space element of the Regional Center in the Township's plan endorsement petition.

29. **Lake Waddill.** NJDEP did not identify the areas adjacent to the Green Branch waterway and the Garden State Parkway right-of-way as a possible area for preservation. This area is owned by the Township and currently undeveloped.

Lakewood Response. Although NJDEP did not identify this area as a possible preservation area, Lakewood proposes that the publicly-held properties be preserved.

B. Proposed Comprehensive Preservation and Open Space Strategy.

The Township has a comprehensive preservation and open space strategy that encompasses the existing regulated and protected areas in Lakewood, including recreation and open space areas, combined with the new areas that Lakewood has proposed for preservation as part of its response to NJDEP. This strategy is illustrated in Figure 6. The map also includes areas that have been identified for further review by the Township. Combined with existing preserved areas, the Township has or proposes to preserve 4,819.5 acres or nearly a third of the Township, with 578 acres identified for further review.

Lakewood's comprehensive strategy also will include a new Open Space and Recreation Plan Element, Conservation Plan Element, and Habitat Conservation Plan of the Master Plan. In addition, Lakewood will adopt habitat and stream corridor protection ordinances adopted as part of the Unified Development Ordinance. In its Regional Center Conceptual Plan, Lakewood is proposing a green infrastructure system that will link the entire Township through a bicycle and pedestrian network. The green infrastructure system will provide recreational opportunities, preserve open space, and establish trails to and from neighborhoods, schools, and recreational and communities facilities within the Regional Center and throughout the Township.

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Lakewood is committed to balancing growth and development with a comprehensive strategy for preservation. The Township is looking forward to further discussion and dialogue with NJDEP regarding Lakewood's proposed comprehensive open space strategy. We also anticipate that NJDEP will continue to provide technical assistance to Lakewood as the Township prepares the necessary amendments to the open space, recreation, and conservation plan elements of the Master Plan and proposed ordinances for habitat conservation and stream corridor protection.

To help you in your evaluation of our response, we have enclosed presentation size versions of each map referenced in this letter as well as a CD that can be used for reproduction.

We look forward to your response and the scheduling of a meeting with you.

Very truly yours,

T&M ASSOCIATES



STAN SLACHETKA, AICP, P.P.
PLANNING CONSULTANT

SCS:VZM:lbw

Enclosures

cc w/enc.: Bernadette Standowski, Township Clerk
Jung Kim, OSG Principal Planner

cc w/o enc.: Township Committee Individually
Frank Edwards, Township Manager
Russell Corby, Executive Director, Lakewood Development Corporation
Rick Brown, NJDEP, Office of Policy, Planning & Science
Bill Purdie, NJDEP, Office of Policy, Planning & Science
Benjamin Spinelli, Executive Director, NJDCA, Office of Smart Growth



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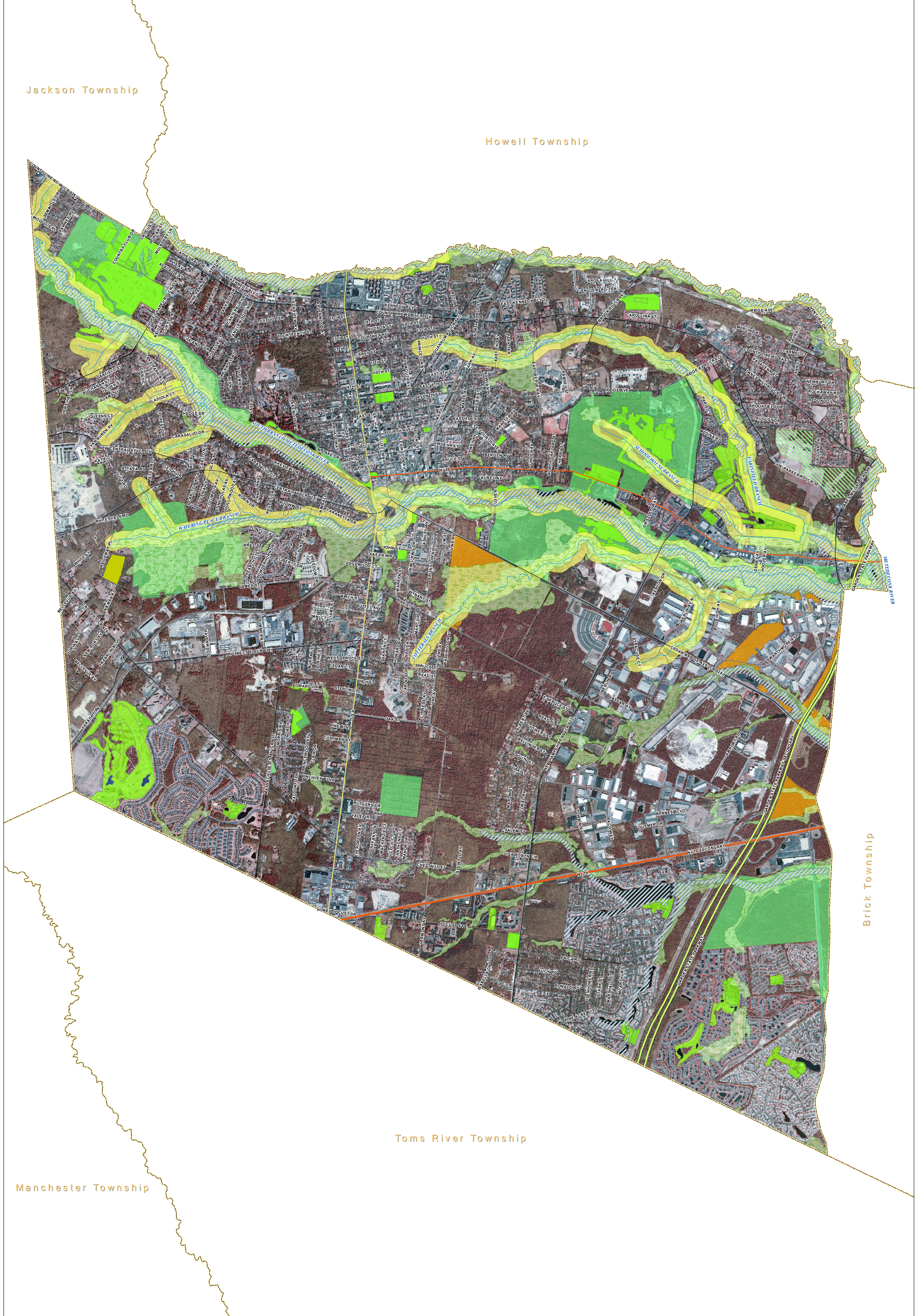
Prepared by: STK, July 12, 2007
Source: NJDEP - Priority Preservation Areas, Municipal Boundary,
2002 Aerials; NJDOT - Roads (2005)
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NJDEP Priority Preservation Areas

- Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat
- Stream
- U.S. Route
- State Route
- Toll Route
- County Route
- Local Roads
- Municipal Boundary

**Figure 1: NJDEP Proposed Priority Preservation Areas
Lakewood Township
Ocean County, New Jersey**

NOTE: This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not State-authorized.



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|------------------------------------|--|
| Category 1 Waterways | Active Farmland Preservation Application |
| Category 1 300' Stream Buffer | U.S. Route |
| Freshwater Wetlands | State Route |
| Flood Hazard Areas | Toll Route |
| Recreational Lands (2002 Land Use) | County Route |
| Open Space | Local Roads |
| Conservation Easements | Municipal Boundary |
| Preserved Farmland | |

**Figure 2: Regulated and Protected Areas/
Existing Recreation and Open Areas
Lakewood Township
Ocean County, New Jersey**

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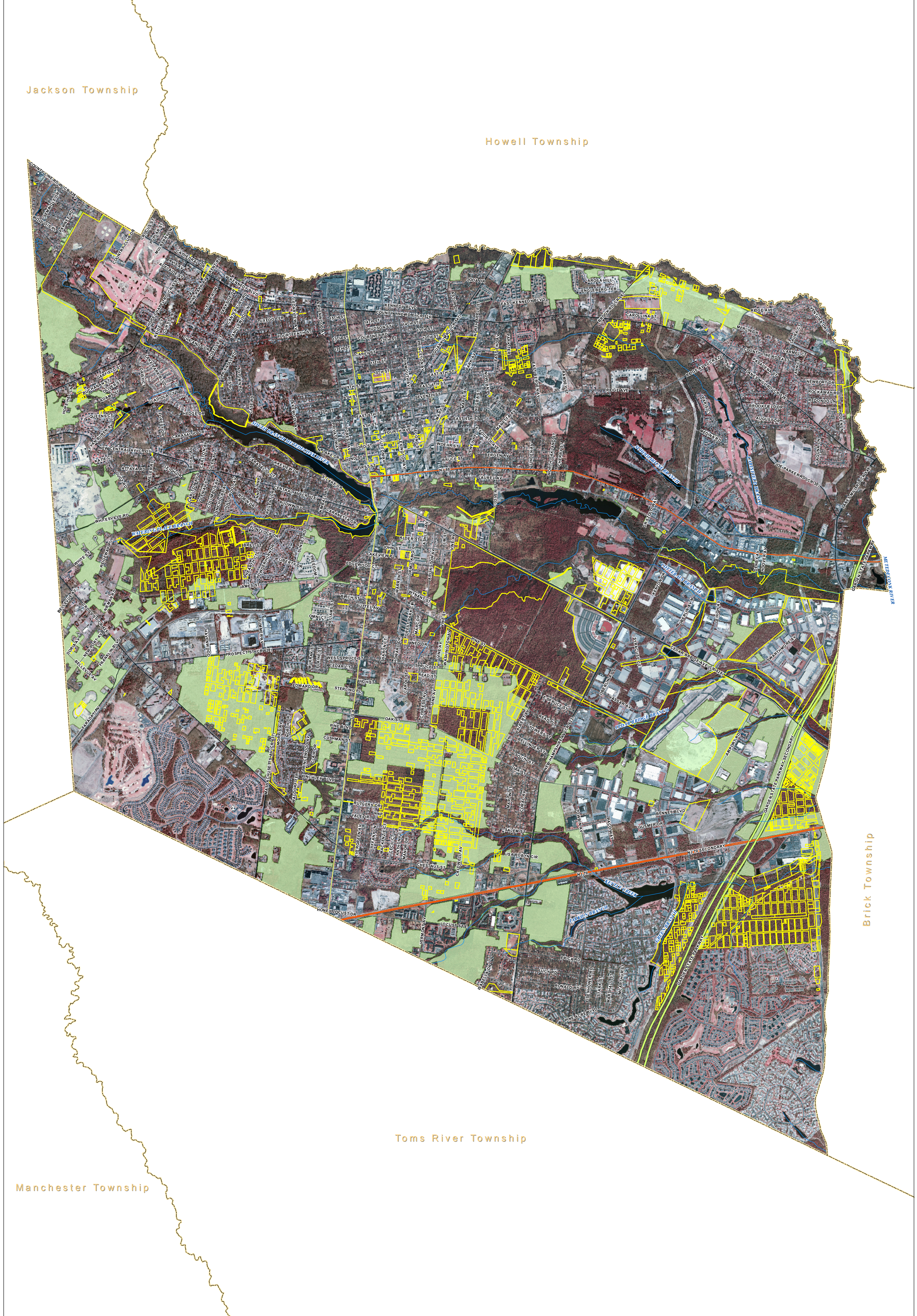
Net NJDEP Priority Preservation Areas

	Threatened and Endangered Species Suitable Habitat		Toll Route
	Stream		County Route
	U.S. Route		Local Roads
	State Route		Municipal Boundary

**Figure 3: Net NJDEP Identified Areas
Lakewood Township
Ocean County, New Jersey**

Prepared by: STK, September 5, 2007
Source: NJDEP - Priority Preservation Areas, Municipal Boundary,
2002 Aerials; NJDOT - Roads (2005)
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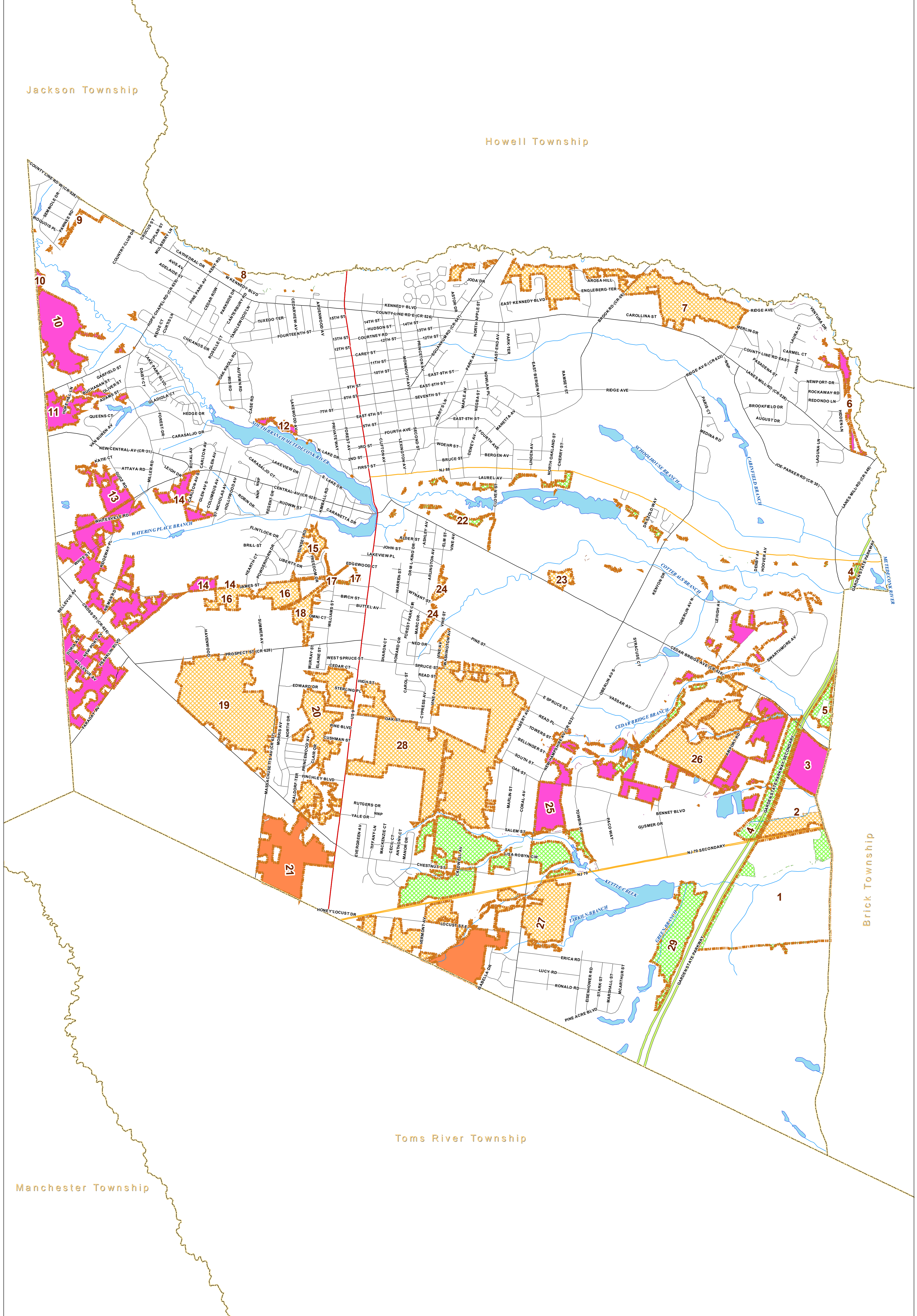
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Source: NJDEP - Priority Preservation Areas, Municipal Boundary,
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- Net NJDEP Priority Preservation Areas**
- Threatened and Endangered Species Suitable Habitat
 - Township Owned Parcels *
 - U.S. Route
 - State Route
 - Toll Route
 - County Route
 - Local Roads
 - Municipal Boundary

* The Township Owned Parcels were developed, in part, using the 1999 Master Plan maps, but this secondary product has not been verified by T&M Associates.

**Figure 4: Net NJDEP Identified Areas with Township Owned Properties
Lakewood Township
Ocean County, New Jersey**

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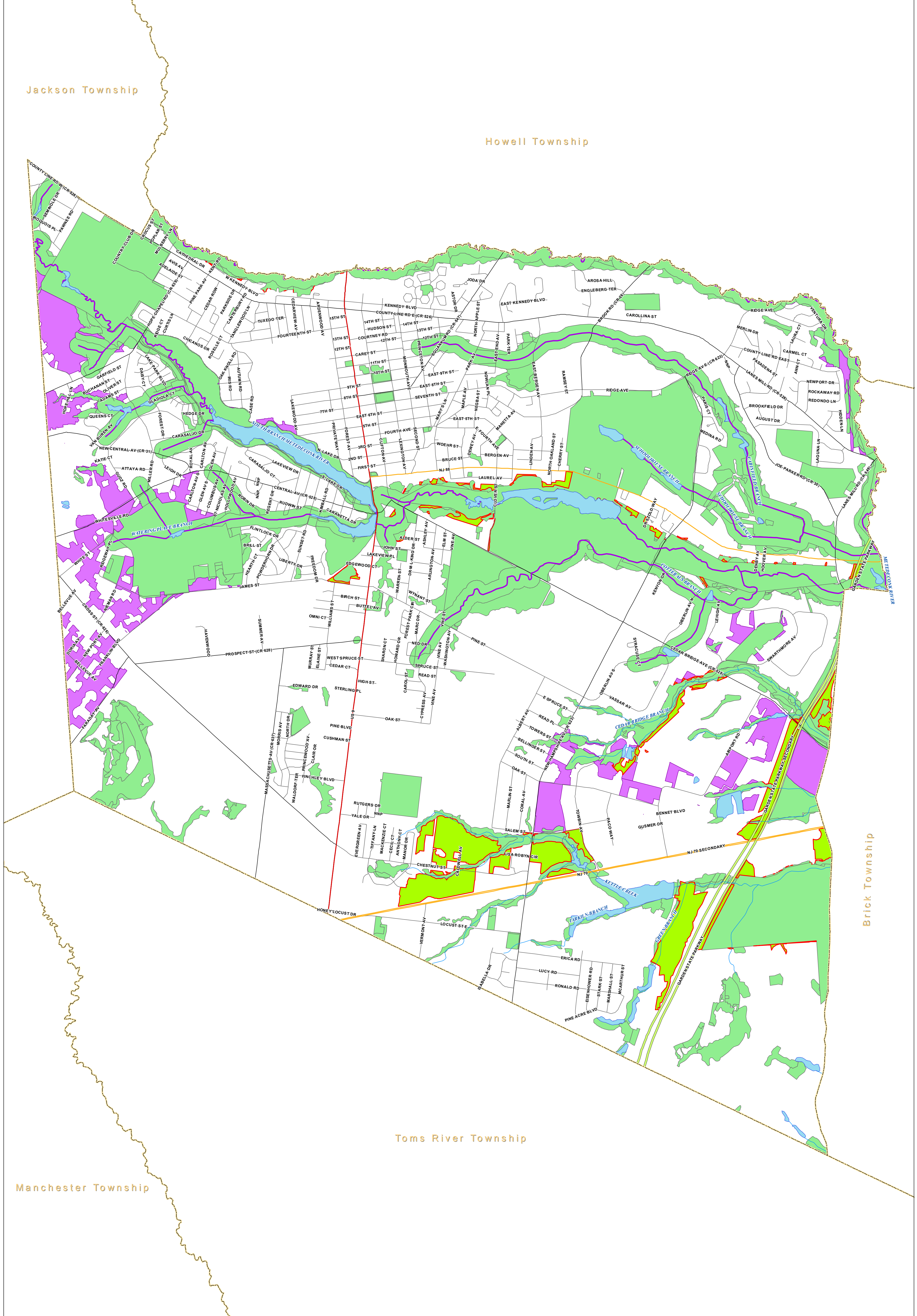
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|--|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| | Proposed Preservation Areas | | U.S. Route |
| | Developed Areas | | State Route |
| | Not Proposed for Preservation | | Toll Route |
| | For Further Review | | County Route |
| | Open Water | | Local Roads |
| | | | Stream |
| | | | Municipal Boundary |

**Figure 5: Proposed Township Preservation Areas
Lakewood Township
Ocean County, New Jersey**

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**Figure 6: Proposed Comprehensive Preservation and Open Space Strategy
Lakewood Township
Ocean County, New Jersey**